



## Saint Maron Maronite Catholic Church

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Jacksonville, FL 32216

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Pastor: Father Elie Abi Chedid

Deacon: Elias Shami

**Mass Schedule: Sundays: 11:15 AM**

**February 2015**

**Volume 15 - Issue 2**



### **Beloved parishioners:**

This year we enter the Lenten journey on February 16 with Ash Monday. This spiritually intense Liturgical season is a favorable time to be reconciled to God, to others and to the whole creation. It is also a favorable time to strongly practice Fasting, Prayer, and Almsgiving described as the three Lenten pillars.

Throughout His salvific ministry, our Lord Jesus made us aware of the serious disease of sin which causes the death of our soul. At the same time he made us aware of the cure that can be found in His merciful heart.

There is a need for all of us to be reminded, time and again, of the commandments of God and His Church that are very much neglected or ignored in our days, and of the mortal sins to be avoided.

God's commandments are not merely suggestions or wishes but they are orders to be observed for our own good; they should be understood both literally and in their large sense. People wrongly contend that when we talk about sin or about God's commandments we are talking negativity, skepticism! But the truth is that through being aware of the damaging effect of sin, and through avoiding it, we can fully and extensively embrace positivity and goodness, and enjoy true freedom, the freedom of the children of God.

### **THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, or THE DECALOGUE**

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day
4. Honor your father and your mother
5. You shall not kill
6. You shall not commit adultery
7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not bear false witness
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife/husband
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

### **The 7 commandments / or precepts of the church**

- I. To attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- II. To observe the days of abstinence and fasting.
- III. To confess sins to a priest, at least once a year.
- IV. To receive Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at least once a year during Easter Season.
- V. To contribute to the support of the Church/Tithing.
- VI. To obey the laws of the Church concerning Matrimony.
- VII. To participate in the Church's mission of Evangelization.

### **The 7 New deadly sins**

1. ``Bioethical' violations such as birth control
2. ``Morally dubious" experiments such as stem cell research
3. Drug abuse
4. Polluting the environment
5. Contributing to widening divide between rich and poor
6. Excessive wealth
7. Creating poverty

## The 7 original or capital deadly sins:

1. Pride
2. Envy
3. Gluttony
4. Lust
5. Anger
6. Greed
7. Sloth

Mortal sins such these can cause sinners serious devastation, the loss of God's grace, and eternal condemnation.

Individuals who have committed mortal sins are in desperate need of healing through repentance and obtaining absolution of their sins through the Sacrament (Mystery) of Reconciliation.

Also surprising, many Christian adults and children don't even know the "Act of Contrition" that penitents are required to recite in confession. It is recommended that the "Act of Contrition" be recited daily following an examination of conscience especially at the end of the day; there are several versions of the Act of Contrition. This is one of the most common versions:

### Act of Contrition

### فعل الندامة

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

رَبِّي وَإِلَهِي أَنَا نَادِمٌ مِنْ كُلِّ قَلْبِي عَلَى جَمِيعِ خَطَايَايَ لِأَنِّي بِالْخَطِيئَةِ خَسِرْتُ نَفْسِي  
وَالْخَيْرَاتِ الْأَبَدِيَّةَ وَاسْتَحَقَّيْتُ الْعَذَابَاتِ الْجَهَنَّمِيَّةَ، وَلَكِنْ بِالأَكْثَرِ أَنَا نَادِمٌ لِأَنِّي  
أَعْظَمْتُكَ وَأَهْنَيْتُكَ أَنْتَ يَا رَبِّي وَإِلَهِي أَنْتَ الْمُسْتَحِقُّ كُلَّ كِرَامَةٍ وَمَحَبَّةٍ، وَلِهَذَا  
السَّبَبِ أَبْغَضُ الْخَطِيئَةَ فَفَوْقَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَأُرِيدُ بِنِعْمَتِكَ أَنْ أَمُوتَ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُغِيظَكَ  
فِيمَا بَعْدَ، وَأَقْصِدُ أَنْ أَهْرُبَ مِنْ كُلِّ سَبَبِ خَطِيئَةٍ وَأَنْ أَفِيَّ بِقَدْرِ اسْتِطَاعَتِي عَنْ  
الْخَطَايَا الَّتِي فَعَلْتُهَا. آمِينَ

The purpose of the Lenten season is to prepare us for **Easter**, the greatest glorious event of all time.

Through His salvific death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior and redeemer, conquered sin, death and evil and opened for us the gates of heaven. Through him every believer can also conquer sin, evil, and death on a personal level.

Saint Peter proclaimed in the Acts of the Apostles: "There is no salvation through anyone else (than Jesus), nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Father Elie

**Powerful prayer to Saint Michael**  
**By Pope Leo XIII**



**Saint Michael the Archangel**

"O Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen"

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## Church's News & Events

### **Feast of Saint Maron**

In celebration of the feast of St. Maron, our church's Patron Saint, a "Fundraising Lunch" will be organized by the church at the church hall, marking also the first Anniversary of "First Mass" in new church, on Sunday February 8, 2015 after Mass.

Sponsors for this event are welcome. All sponsors will be recognized at dinner and in the church's newsletter.

Chef Samir Gebrael graciously offered to prepare the food.

Adults: \$20

Children under 12: \$12

### **Ash Monday**

According to the Maronite Liturgical calendar, Lent starts this year on Monday, February 16; Mass and distribution of Ashes will be celebrated on Monday evening at 7:00 PM.

## **Fast and Abstinence during Lent**

Fast is obligatory on Ash Monday and on Great Friday of Crucifixion. Abstinence from meat is obligatory on Ash Monday and all Fridays during the Lenten Season.

## **Adoration of the Holy Cross**

Every Friday during the Season of Great Lent, the Service of the Blessing with the Holy Cross is held at 7:00 PM. Confessions will be available before or after the service and upon request.

## **Second collections**

A second collection will be taken on the feast of Saint Maron, Sunday February 8, 2015 for the church building fund/Loan payment, and during all Sundays of Lent for “Eparchial Charities Appeal”.

## **2014 Receipts of Giving**

Your 2014 receipts of giving have been mailed to you. There was a small mistake on the title of receipts: It reads from 1/1/2013 to 12/31/2014; it should read from 1/1/2014 to 12/31/2014. You may make the correction by hand. In case you need a new receipt please call the church.

## **Parish Council**

A new parish council for our church has been formed for one year term, effective January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015 as follows:

- Deacon Elias Shami
- Dr. John Assi
- Dr. Gaby Bahri
- Mrs. Carol Tegho
- Mrs. Sanaa Saliba
- Mr. Antonio Mahfoud
- Dr. Naja Naddaf
- Mr. Elias Trad

As we thank the outgoing committee, our good wishes go to the new council.

## **Eligibility to Parish Council membership**

A member should be:

- Of good character
- Active member of the church
- Giving tithing to the church
- Supportive of the priest and the community, having no enmity within the parish
- Abiding by the Church’s bylaws

## Parish Council News

The Parish Council held a meeting on January 20, 2015 at 7:00 PM at St Maron church hall.

ATTENDEES: Father Elie, Deacon Shami, Dr. John Assi, Mr. Anthonio Mahfoud, Dr. Gaby Bahri, Ms. Carol Tegho, Mrs. Sanaa Saliba, Mr. Elias Trad, Dr. Naja Naddaf.

The committee discussed the council's functions and responsibilities:

A- Pastoral Care / Outreach by encouraging involvement

-Coordination between parish organizations

-Activities organization & coordination

-Religious Education/First Holy Communion

-Liturgical life

-Website managing...

B- Stewardship: Outreach

Formulate and execute Fundraising Programs, Donate on line/Tithing campaign etc...

-Maintenance and development of parish properties.

- Manage custodian and landscape tasks.

- Help manage parish funds.

All the members constitute the Pastoral Parish Council, and three among them serve as Stewardship council.

The pastor is the actual President of the Parish Council. According to Church's bylaws, the pastor represents the parish in all its juridic affairs (CCEC can. 290).

The Council elected Dr. John Assi for chairperson and Mrs. Sanaa Saliba for secretary. Elected members for the Stewardship Council are: Dr. John Assi, Mr. Elias Trad and Mrs. Carol Tegho.

### **CURRENT CONCERNS:**

The following issues were discussed at the meeting:

-The Parish Council will set an example in respecting the rules.

-The Parish Council is aware that it is a transitional board; other eligible members can join the council in upcoming terms.

-All parishioners are to be helping and caring for the church.

-The Stewardship Council will be helping with bookkeeping, and will present an annual budget report.

-All organizations and activities involving parishioners such as Youth Group, Women Guild, Knights of Columbus, choirs, spiritual groups, and fundraisers...should be under the parish umbrella and work in coordination with the parish schedule. Leaders or members of these organizations should be active in the church and show support to the church.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Feast of St. Maron: February 8<sup>th</sup>. / Chef Samir Gebrael will be catering the food  
\$20 for Adults / \$12 for Kids

A 2<sup>nd</sup> Collection will be taken on the Feast of St. Maron

### **Suggestion**

There was a suggestion to invite a Melkite priest to celebrate a Mass on a special Holiday for parishioners of Greek Catholic rite.

The Parish Council will hold their meetings every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the church hall.

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### **Saint Charbel Shrine**

Father Elie approached Bishop Felipe Estevez, Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Augustine with the idea of erecting a Shrine for Saint Charbel on the Mission “Nombre de Dios” site in the city of Saint Augustine, since St Charbel has become nowadays a very popular saint worldwide. The Bishop welcomed the idea but suggested the Shrine be erected at “Marywood Retreat and Conference Center”.

Father Elie would like to form a special committee to manage this project, so please let him know if you would like to be part of this committee. Remaining stones from the church construction can be used for the shrine.

Please pray for this proposal to come into fruition.

### **Ladies of the Rosary**

The prayer of the Rosary is taking place every Thursday at 11:00 AM at the church. Everyone is welcome to join in this devotion.

Father Elie held a meeting with the Ladies of the Rosary group; he praised them for their dedication to their faith and their love to Our Lady, the Mother of Our Lord. He urged them to worship in spirit and truth, having their prayers tied to virtue and good deeds, and acting like missionaries within the community. He urged them as well to be active and supportive members of the church and to also be attending important church's functions as Masses, Novenas, and other Liturgical services.

Father Elie also wished that the members of the group from other churches try to participate in some of our church's activities.

### **St Maron's Youth Group**

A Meeting for all the youth of our church (13 years and older) is scheduled for Saturday February 7, 2015 at 11:30 AM. Parents are asked to encourage their children to join the Youth Group and are welcome to join in the youth' meetings.

Our thanks go to Dr. Gabriella Assi who kindly accepted to serve as Youth Group leader.

## **Loan payment**

Our next goal for the coming year is to pay off the church loan (\$361,000.00). We hope before long we can organize a “Mortgage Burning Party”.

Donations towards loan payment are welcome.

## **Seating in church**

Please always occupy the pews in the front of the church (The last four or five pews on each side are not to be occupied unless there are no free pews in the front).

Please be punctual for Mass. Readers, choir members and altar boys should be at church at least 10 minutes before Mass.

Everyone is required to be dressed with appropriate church attire.

## **Entrance door during Mass**

In order to maintain quiet and undistracted atmosphere at Mass. The entrance door to be used during Mass is from the drop-off area.

## **Dedication CD / DVD / Commemorative Ad Book**

The Commemorative Ad Book published on the occasion of the dedication of our new church is available for purchase. Donation: \$25.

Also, if you like to have a DVD and/or audio CD copy of the dedication Mass and banquet, please place your order with Mrs. Sanaa Saliba.

## **Use of the church hall**

Our church hall is available for use for your special celebrations. Please contact the church for reservations.



## 2015/ DATES FOR SECOND COLLECTIONS

January 25, 2015	United States Catholic Bishops' Worldwide Charities (This collection combines the four USCCB collections: Central and Eastern Europe, the Church in Latin America, Catholic Relief Services, and Operation Rice Bowl [which is part of CRS]. The total is divided accordingly.)
February 16 - April 5 (Lent)	Eparchial Charities Appeal
April 3, 2015 (Good Friday)	Holy Land Collection (Part of this collection is sent through the USCCB to the Holy Land and another part is sent directly to the Maronite Eparchy of Haifa.)
April 26, 2015	Catholic Home Missions Appeal (This collection is used for Missions in the USA. Our Eparchy has received large grants from the USCCB from this collection for several years.)
May 3, 2015 Feast of O. L. North of Lebanon	National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon (All funds collected are sent from the Chancery directly to our Shrine in Jackson, Ohio.)
May 17, 2015	Catholic Communications Campaign (Following the norms established by the USCCB, 50% of this collection is sent to them for national Catholic television, radio and other media, and 50% is retained by our Eparchy for the Maronite Voice and any other communication needs we may have.)
June 28, 2015 Feast of Sts. emergency Peter & Paul	Holy Father's Collection (Peter's Pence) (The entire collection is sent to the Holy Father for him to assist with financial assistance to aid the most needy throughout the world.)
September 13, 2015	Catholic University of America (This collection provides funding for academic scholarships at CUA. Our own seminarians are given a 50% discount in tuition.)
October 18, 2015	World Mission Sunday (formerly, Propagation of the Faith) (As established by the USCCB, 91% of this collection goes to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and 9% to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association [CNEWA]).
December 6, 2015	Maronite Patriarchal Charities / (All the proceeds from this collection are sent directly to our Patriarch for his charitable works.

## Maintaining God's House

We thank all families and individuals who tithe regularly and generously to the church. Please note that the annual registration dues (\$250) are meant to be just a part of tithing fulfillment.

All families/Individuals are urged to make this contribution, which is usually taken at the beginning of the year, unless they are financially unable.

You can always mail your tithing and Sunday's offering to the church even though you may not be attending.

According to God's and Church's commandments, every working individual that receives a salary is required to tithe to the church on a personal level.

## Some directives for the use of the new church

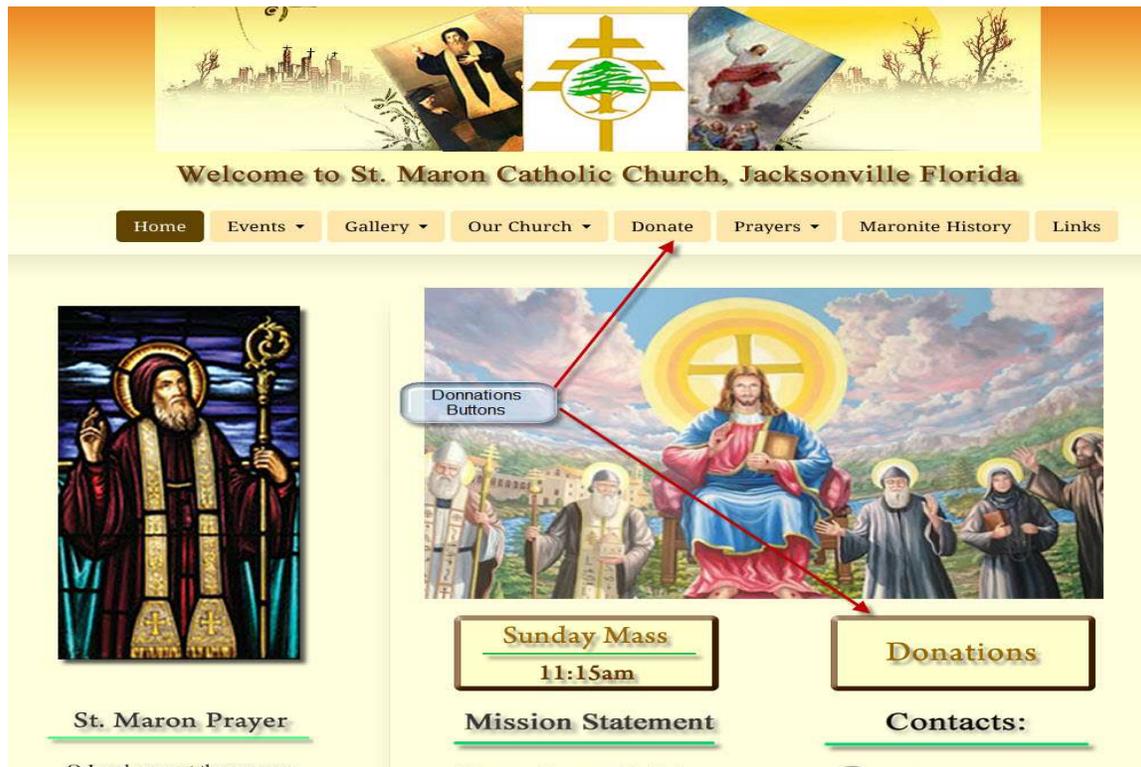
- A new missal is being used in the new church. Please make sure to follow closely this new missal since some of the wording in Liturgy is now different.
- **We have 120 books. Each family/ individual is called to help defray the cost of this new missal (\$30 each). Also Sponsors for the new books are welcome.**
- Missals must not be removed from church nor handled by small children.
- **No food or drinks are allowed in the new church facility (including cry-room).**
- Mezzanine is not to be used except when no other seats are available in the nave (main sanctuary).
- **Special attention should be given (in particular to kids) to not touch fire alarm levers, the alarm will go off instantly, and we will be charged a fine (\$250 minimum). It is better not to mess with any switches or volume controls in the church.**
- Only toddlers 4 years of age and under are to be in cry-room with one of the parents. Cry-room is not a playground but a training ground. Please don't let kids wander in hallways during Mass.
- **It is preferred to use the eastward entrance door (closest to the hall). Drop-off area is to be used especially by elderly and in raining weather.**
- Normally the right-side of doors will be unlocked. The sacristy's door is a service door to be used only by clergy.
- **Since the pews are not screwed to the (marble) floor, please do not force the pews to move when sitting.**
- Please always try to occupy the front of the church and be punctual. Readers, choir members and altar boys should be at church at least 10 minutes before Mass, and are required to be dressed with appropriate church attire.
- **Smoking is not allowed by any church's entrance door. Also chewing gums are not allowed in church; Gums should be disposed of in trash cans.**
- Fellowship will be taking place immediately after Mass in the social hall not in church.
- **Hymnal sheets will be placed on the entrance table; kindly return them to the table at the end of the Mass.**
- The drop-off area is not a parking place; that area should remain unblocked.
- **Unless for emergency, please use bathrooms in the hall. Please make a special effort not to use restrooms during Mass since this is most disrespectful to God and disrupt the people around, and not to let small kids unattended in bathrooms. And please make sure all sanitary products are placed in trash receptacles.**
- All phones and devices are not allowed in the church or are to be turned off during Mass.

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## Church Website/Donate on line

Our church introduced a “Donate on line” program using credit cards. The program is available through the church’s website: [www.stmaronjax.com](http://www.stmaronjax.com) .

Your benefits from this program are: 1-You earn points on your credit card; 2-You keep accurate records of your donation; 3- You save time and stamps on writing and mailing checks; 4-Your donation is tax deductible.



For more information you may contact Mrs. Sana’ Saliba at (904) 514-4114. If you would like to place an Ad on the website please contact Mr. Elias Trad at (561) 809-8668.

### A reminder of the obvious

Out of respect first for God and second for those who are in church to worship Him, there needs to be a sincere effort to dress appropriately and decently, arrive on time, control your children, and keep your phones and all electronic devices off until after Mass.

### Protecting God’s children

Pamphlets outlining the pro-active policy of the United States Catholic Bishops to protect children are available at the church, or by logging on to [www.usccb.org/ocyp/](http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/). Likewise information on our own Eparchial policy on sexual abuse can be found on our Eparchial website [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org). It takes a dedicated team effort to safeguard our children.

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# Project Roots



The Maronite Eparchies of Saint Maron and of Our Lady of Lebanon join together to help people reconnect with their Christian spiritual roots in Lebanon and the Middle East. An office in Los Angeles will assist those interested to:

1. Register their vital life events.
2. Obtain their sacramental records from their country of origin.
3. Connect with family members living in their place of origins and throughout the world where they emigrated.
4. Obtain Lebanese citizenship if desired.
5. Obtain immigration records if desired.
6. Remain connected with the Maronite Church here and throughout the world.

For more information you may contact: Main office (CA) Ph: (310) 275-6634 / (310) 276-1939 MLM 333 South San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Or visit websites: [www.projectroots.net](http://www.projectroots.net) & [www.registerlebnani.com](http://www.registerlebnani.com)

Project Roots is an endeavor of the two Maronite Eparchies in the US in collaboration with the Maronite Foundation in the World / Christian Lebanese Foundation (CLFW).

**Register in Lebanon** with us and **spread the word** about the need for registration. Your registration will NOT jeopardize your American citizenship. It will help Lebanon maintain the demographic and political power-sharing balance and prevent the Christians there from becoming only **10%** of the population.

Contact one of **Project Roots** representatives **today** and start the process. You can even use the website ([www.projectroots.net](http://www.projectroots.net)) to register online and get a chance to win **free tickets to Lebanon**.

If you have already tried to register without success, sign the **Lebanese Citizenship Petition**:

[www.yes-i-want.com](http://www.yes-i-want.com). Together, we can effect change!

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## Bequests and Planned Giving

Have you considered including your Parish in your will? A will is an expression of your commitment to the principles, people and institutions that you cherish here on earth. As an active participant and a supporter of your Church, a bequest in your will ensures that the work of the Maronite Church

can continue after you are gone. It is a lasting testament that has great significance.

Remembering your Parish in your will is easy to do. Here is an example of the words you can use to do this:

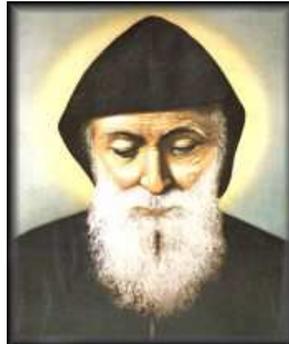
"I give and bequeath to St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church, located on 7032 Bowden Rd in Jacksonville, Florida, \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [Or: The sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_."

## Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

The gift of an asset such as common stock or mutual fund shares is a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset. Gifts of other appreciated assets such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits. Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis and discussed with an accountant or tax adviser.

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## Order of Saint Sharbel



Bishop Gregory Mansour has asked all clergy in the Eparchy of Saint Maron to assist in enriching the order of Saint Sharbel both spiritually and on the level of involvement.

The order of Saint Sharbel, established in 1980, is an organization of lay people and clergy who have pledged their spiritual strength and financial support to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Its first objective is to direct financial assistance towards educating the seminarians of our Eparchy.

When it will be possible the second objective is to provide additional benefits to our retired clergy in order for them to live with dignity and make it easier for them to share the wisdom of their years.

One way in sharing in the Order's objectives is to become a member. There are two forms of membership annual and perpetual. All billing comes from the Chancery Office and is paid to the Chancery.

**Annual Membership**

An Annual Member is one who pledges to donate \$500.00 annually or four equal installments of \$125.00 yearly (yearly membership starts from the month you join).

**Perpetual Membership**

A Perpetual member is one who makes a one-time donation of \$5,000 to the Order's Trust Fund. Perpetual members can choose to make four equal installments over a one-year period.

For more information you may visit the Eparchy's website: [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

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**Reflection of the month:**

“God bestows more consideration on the purity of intention with which our actions are performed than on the actions themselves”.

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